

November 15, 2002

SUBJECT: 2002 Performance Appraisal and Awards Process

TO: Vicki Smith, OA
Maxine Cooke, OA
Lisa Douglas, FRED
Juanita Ortman, ISD
Jennifer Myers, MTED
Lori McPherson, RED

FROM: Theresa Bailey, Human Resources Specialist
Performance and Awards Staff
Human Resources Division, AFM

Action Required - Please See Deadlines

As you are aware, on October 31, 2002, the performance appraisal cycle for single interval staff, and GS-14 and GS-15 employees ended. The performance appraisal cycle for double interval staff at GS-13 and below will end on December 31, 2002. The following information serves as guidance on this year's process.

Completion of Performance Appraisal Forms (AD-435P)

Again this year, Divisions should prepare a Word version of the Performance Appraisal Form (AD-435P) for each employee. The form is available on the Human Resources Division (HRD) home page at www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/hrd/hrdhomepage/wpforms.htm. Divisions will receive employee lists to facilitate the preparation of appraisals and to document employee performance awards. Once the form is completed and printed, each individual AD-435P should be saved to disk and retained for use for future performance cycles. Since the disk will contain sensitive information, please keep the disk in a secure place and/or password protect the document on disk or in your system when saving.

After the rating official, reviewing official, and the employee have completed and signed the AD-435P, a copy should be made for the employee and a copy should be retained for the supervisor's records. The original AD-435P will be sent to HRD along with an accomplishment report or written justification for any employee receiving *Outstanding* rating, or a written justification for any employee who is rated "*Does Not Meet*" on any performance element. The original AD 435 A/B form should be retained in the supervisor's files.

Completion of Recommendation for Award Forms (AD-287-2)

You will receive a list titled "*Technical and Clerical*", which will be used for single interval staff. The list titled "*Professional and Administrative*" will be used for GS-14 and GS-15

employees. The list titled “*Professional and Administrative GS-13 and Below*” will be used for double interval employees whose performance cycle ends December 31, 2002.

As done in previous years, each Division will prepare a blanket AD-287-2 for employees receiving performance awards. The blanket AD-287-2 must be attached to the appropriate completed list and sent to HRD for awards processing. If an employee on a list is to receive an award, the bonus amount and the accounting code must be completed on the listing. If an employee receives an award over \$500, the employee’s accomplishment report must accompany the AD-287-2 and list to HRD.

For GS-15 level employees ONLY. Divisions should send the original AD-435P and one copy, along with an accomplishment report or written justifications for any employee receiving an *Outstanding* rating, or a written justification for any employee who is rated “*Does Not Meet*” on any performance element to Maxine Cooke, Administrator’s Office, Room N4145. Once performance bonus amounts are determined, Maxine will prepare the blanket AD-287-2 and complete the employee list and forward all documentation to HRD.

Documentation to the Human Resources Division

Please send the following performance appraisal documentation and award packages, in the form of a complete Division package to my attention at HRD/REE Services Branch, Performance and Awards Staff, Rm. 3-1148 B, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705-5107:

Performance Appraisal Forms - AD-435Ps

- ★ Original AD-435P
- ★ Accomplishment report or written justification for Outstanding or Unacceptable rating, if applicable

Recommendation for Award Forms - AD-287-2:

- ★ Original blanket AD-287-2
- ★ Completed Division list
- ★ Copy of the AD 435-P for each employee receiving an award in order as they appear on Division list
- ★ Copy of the accomplishment report for any employee receiving an award over \$500 or a Quality Step increase (QSI) in order as they appear on Division list.

NOTE: Prior to sending any package, please contact me on (301) 504-1452 to alert me that the package is coming.

Deadlines

For performance cycle ending October 31, 2002, please have all appraisal forms (AD-435Ps) and award forms (AD-287-2s) to HRD NO LATER THAN January 10, 2003. Awards for this cycle will be effective January 26, 2003 and will be paid in February 20, 2003 pay checks.

For performance cycle ending December 31, 2002, please have all appraisal forms (AD-435Ps) and award forms (AD-287-2s) to HRD NO LATER THAN February 28, 2003. Awards will be made effective March 9, 2002 and will be paid in April 3, 2003 pay checks.

Reminders

Employees who have been under performance elements and standards for at least 90 days must receive an appraisal using the AD-435P. Those excluded include student appointees, employees in full-time training, employees who are on intermittent work schedules, or employees on temporary appointments limited to one year or less. If an employee has not been covered under performance elements and standards for the minimum appraisal period of 90 days, the appraisal period for that employee must be extended to meet the 90-day requirement, at which time the employee should receive his/her rating of record.

Supervisors who assign a less than *Fully Successful* summary rating to an employee, should contact their servicing Employee Relations Specialist immediately upon making that determination.

Performance plans for the next rating period should be established and communicated to employees. Please refer to Enclosure 1, "Checklist for Preparing Performance Plans", when developing new plans.

The Rating Official should discuss employee ratings with the Reviewing Official and receive concurrence, prior to discussing final rating with employees. **The Rating Official and Reviewing Official cannot be the same person. The Reviewing Official must sign the rating form before it is discussed with the employee.**

Contacts

Questions regarding performance appraisal and awards policy and procedures may be referred to Theresa Bailey, 301-504-1452, Helene Saylor, 301-504-1432 or Mary Oxner, on 301-504-1368.

Enclosure

cc:

Metropolitan Services Branch, HRD
Employee Relations Branch, HRD
Performance and Awards Staff, HRD

CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING PERFORMANCE PLANS

Performance plans should be developed for each employee within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period. It is important to note that an employee who receives an unacceptable rating should not be placed under new standards until they receive the opportunity to improve their current performance. Supervisors must contact their servicing Employee Relations Specialist for immediate assistance. The following are some reminders for establishing a performance plan.

1. Check the employee's position description for accuracy; the major duties in the position description should be included in the performance plan as critical elements. Accomplishment of organizational objective and goals can be included in performance plans.
2. Employee participation in developing the plan is desirable. However, the rating and reviewing officials have the final responsibility for establishing the performance plan.
3. Each plan must have at least three, but no more than ten elements.
4. At least one element must be critical; at least one element must be non-critical.
5. Standards should be accurate, objective, measurable, attainable and understandable.
6. Each employee whose position is classified as a "supervisor" must have a critical element that addresses supervisory responsibility AND a separate critical element that addresses the Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights (EO/CR). (Positions classified as supervisor usually include Supervisory, Supervisor, Manager, Officer, or Administrator in the title).
7. In performance plans for non-supervisory employees, language outlining responsibility for demonstrating a commitment to EO/CR must be included in at least one critical element.
8. The performance plan must be signed by the employee, supervisor, and reviewing official (normally, the second-level supervisor). The employee should then receive a copy of the approved plan.

In addition:

There must be at least one documented mid-year or progress review during the appraisal period. The performance plan should be initiated by the rating official and the employee. This shows that such a review took place.

If deficiencies are noted in an employee's performance at any time during the rating period, supervisors should contact their servicing Employee Relations Specialist to discuss the appropriate procedures to handle such circumstances.